



Fr. Francis Fugini, OFM Cap.

October 1, 1925 - August 13, 2021

FATHER FRANCIS FUGINI, OFM Cap.

Father Francis Fugini, OFM Cap, a veteran of World War II and former Provincial Minister of the Capuchin Province of St. Augustine, entered eternal life in the early hours of August 13, 2021. He was 95 years old at the time of his death, the oldest friar of the Province.

He was born on October 1, 1925, the third of eleven children of Peter and Marie (Piccola) Fugini, and baptized Richard at Mater Dolorosa Church in Chicora, Butler County, PA. He was educated at the public elementary and high schools of Chicora and enjoyed a close-knit, faith-filled Italian family life with aunts, uncles, cousins and grandmothers (distinguished by the color of their houses as "green Nonna" and "white Nonna") all near at hand and frequently visited. He never lapsed in gratitude and love for his family and the richness of his Italian heritage, sharing memories and seeking distant relations until very late in his life.

The shadow of World War II eventually clouded these family comforts and young Richard enlisted in the U.S. Navy upon graduating from high school in 1943. After completing boot camp in Sampson, NY and enjoying a brief home furlough, he was shipped to Fort Hueneme, California ("Tent City"), then to Treasure Island in Oakland, and ultimately to Pearl Harbor where he first

worked repairing airplane engines and was later recruited by the Catholic Chaplain to serve as Chaplain's Assistant and librarian of the local library – an opportunity he accepted with relief and enthusiasm. This combination of faith-filled service and administrative competence would mark his time far beyond that spent in the Navy. He wrote: "While in the service I corresponded with Fr. Giles Staab, OFM Cap at St. Fidelis Seminary in Herman, PA. I had met Fr. Giles on the occasion of a Boy Scout retreat at St. Fidelis Seminary. I also saw him when he assisted at our parish church in Chicora. A couple of weeks after my honorable discharge I drove to Herman and met with Fr. Giles and Fr. Victor Green who welcomed me to St. Fidelis. I entered St. Fidelis College Seminary in September of 1946".

Upon completing his second year of studies at St. Fidelis, Richard entered the Capuchin novitiate on July 13, 1948, receiving the clothes of probation and the religious name "Francis", which he held for the rest of his life. Following his profession of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience one year later he returned to St. Fidelis to complete his college studies and subsequently entered priestly formation at Capuchin College in Washington, DC. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 5, 1954.

For most friars, the reception of Holy Orders begins a life of ministry that includes changes of assignment on a fairly regular basis. Fr. Francis, on the other hand, moved only three times during the entire sixty-seven years of his priestly ministry. Following a brief stay at St. Charles Borromeo friary in St. Louis, MO from 1955-56, he was assigned to Victoria, KS and St. Francis Seminary, where he would spend the next sixteen years as Professor, Prefect of Discipline and Studies, and High School Principal. One friar recently remarked that "Frank Fugini formed the seminary culture at St. Francis Seminary during my years in Victoria, KS." When the Seminary had to close its doors in 1970, Fr. Francis graciously and wholeheartedly assisted in transforming the former seminary into St. Francis Renewal Center, where he

spent his final two years in Kansas as Director.

It was difficult for Fr. Francis to leave Kansas and the heartfelt efforts he had invested in training young men for priesthood and religious life, but it is a hallmark of his career that when faced with difficult circumstances and decisions he spoke his mind clearly and with charity, and then gave himself wholly to the resulting outcome whether it served his preferences or not. He trusted deeply in God's providence, saying, "My biggest surprises came after ordination to the priesthood. On a scale of 1 to 10, not one of my assignments after ordination would have been on my personal list of preferences. I was gratefully surprised at the peace and grace I experienced in working with people in places and ministries to which I was assigned. God works in wonderful, mysterious and surprising ways. Indeed, God is good."

In 1972 Fr. Francis was called back to St. Augustine Friary in Pittsburgh. For the next forty-eight years he served the friars and the province in its administration. Initially named Director for Personnel, Ministries and Liturgy, he added the positions of Executive Secretary and Archivist to his list of duties in 1979. He handled each and every task with graciousness and competence, yet no one was more surprised than he when he was elected to the first of his two terms as Provincial Minister in 1989. Even then he retained the detailed and demanding work of Province Archivist until the onset of the Covid pandemic in 2020. From 1989 to 1991 he oversaw the demolition of the original "motherhouse" friary and the construction of a new provincial residence on the site. At the completion of his second term as Provincial Minister in 1992 he moved immediately into the work of updating and stabilizing the Seraphic Mass Association, the provincial mission office, continuing in that role for the next 19 years, when limitations of age and health began to take their natural toll on him.

He loved the liturgy of the Church and had a fine singing voice, usually adding harmony to the hymns sung by the friars during the Liturgy of the Hours and at Mass. He was health-conscious and remained an avid cyclist into his 80's. He had a fine memory and mind for details until the latter years of his life and was a treasure trove of institutional memory for the Province of St. Augustine. He was a fervent gardener and enjoyed hours planting and tending the friary gardens

After suffering a fall on May 22nd, Fr. Francis was admitted to UPMC Presbyterian Hospital. Over the following weeks he underwent procedures to stem bleeding in his brain. Nevertheless, his health gradually deteriorated and he passed away peacefully on August 13.

Father Francis was predeceased by his brothers Carl, Alfred, Robert and Lewis, and his sister Gloria (Sacharski). He is survived by brothers Vincent of Chicora and Franklin of Butler, and sisters Bernadette (Martin) of High Point, NC, Sylvia (Pennington) and Rose Mary (Rumbaugh), both of Chicora.

Friars will receive the body of Father Francis at St. Augustine Friary, 221 36th Street, Pittsburgh, on Tuesday afternoon, August 17th. Visitation will be held in the friary chapel beginning at 7 PM. A Vigil Service will be conducted beginning at 8 PM.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 AM on Wednesday, August 18th at St. Augustine Church, 220 37th Street, Pittsburgh. Interment will be in the Friars plot of St. Augustine Cemetery immediately following the funeral liturgy.

Contributions in memory of Fr. Francis may be made to the Capuchin Friars, 220 37th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201.

Professional services trusted to D'ALESSANDRO FUNERAL HOME and
CREMATORY LTD., Lawrenceville. www.dalessandroltd.com.

Cemetery Details

St Augustine Cemetery

Pittsburgh, PA 15209

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

AUG 18. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Augustine Church
225 37th Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201

Visitation

AUG 18. 7:00 PM.

friary chapel

Vigil Service

AUG 18. 8:00 PM (ET)

D'Alessandro Funeral Home and Crematory Ltd.
4522 Butler Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201

Tribute Wall



“ *Fr. Francis Fugini, OFM Cap.*

January 13, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ *A gentle & kind man and priest. May he rest in God's eternal peace.*

Kathi (Graham) Huselton - August 16, 2021 at 09:24 PM



“ *Love,Barrie, Beth, Marcy, Erin and Peter purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Fr. Francis Fugini, OFM Cap..*



Love,Barrie, Beth, Marcy, Erin and Peter - August 16, 2021 at 08:35 PM